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RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD 0616
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RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1471
RUEHAST/USOFFICE ASTANA 0089
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 002708

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [TBIO](#) [AMED](#) [FAID](#) [CASC](#) [SENV](#) [EFIN](#) [EAGR](#) [TU](#) [KFLU](#)
SUBJECT: AVIAN INFLUENZA: TURKEY AND THE WORLD BANK

REF: STATE 67574

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ANKARA 00002708 001.2 OF 003

¶1. SUMMARY: Coming on the heels of the WHO/FAO hosted Avian Influenza (AI) conference in Ankara (supported by USAID), The World Bank gained Executive Board approval on April 24 for a \$34.4 million loan to Turkey (out of a \$54 million package) that will support Turkey's AI readiness and capacity and provide a model for the region. A recent conference call at the Ankara World Bank office targeted next steps for the USAID \$1 million grant portion, which is

focused on restructuring the backyard poultry industry, primarily in the east. End Summary.

Background

¶12. Turkey has been broadly recognized for delivering a robust and transparent response to its AI outbreaks. Turkey experienced its first outbreak of AI in October 2005 in western Turkey and took prompt containment measures impacting a number of poultry farms. There were no human cases at that time. In January 2006 a much more widespread outbreak occurred, starting initially in northeastern Turkey, and eventually affecting backyard poultry in 58 of Turkey's 81 provinces. The GOT took comprehensive control measures, ultimately culling over 2.3 million birds over the next few months. Turkey experienced the first human cases of AI outside of East Asia, eventually detecting 21 cases (12 confirmed by an outside lab) and 4 deaths, mostly children who had close contact with infected animals. The sequential AI outbreaks had a devastating economic effect on the commercial poultry industry, although the second and larger outbreak generally affected only backyard husbandry.

World Bank - USAID Contribution

¶13. On April 24 the World Bank Executive Board approved a \$34.4 million loan as part of a \$54 million package for assisting Turkey in controlling and responding to the threat posed by Avian Influenza (AI) and preparing for a possible human influenza pandemic. The package is crafted to support

ANKARA 00002708 002.2 OF 003

prevention, preparedness and planning, and response and containment. Roughly 60% of the funding will be focused on animal health and 40% on human health, with a significant shared element for public awareness and coordination, and supporting a National Zoonotic Committee. The GOT convinced the World Bank that Turkey did not need a centralized coordinating body at the Prime Ministry, citing effective coordination during the outbreaks between the Ministries of Health and Agriculture. Following drafting and signing of the associated loan agreement expected May 15, the agreement will be published in the Official Gazette. The EC is providing \$10 million in grants from its accession funds and there is almost \$10 million in local contribution from the GOT.

¶14. USAID is contributing a \$1 million grant to the AI support package; this will be administrated through the World Bank. This portion is focused on safe reintroduction of poultry after culling and restructuring of backyard poultry practices to augment bio-security. About one-fourth of the facility will be dedicated to an associated communication strategy. In a May 8 video-conference call USAID official Nathan Blanchette repeated praise to GOT officials on Turkey's strong and transparent response to AI, citing Turkey's potential as model in the region as the main reason for USAID's support to Turkey. USAID supported a recent WHO-FAO organized regional technical conference on AI held in Ankara (Ref A).

Challenges with the Health Ministry

¶15. World Bank local official Ibrahim Akcayoglu described the bank's challenges in bringing the World Bank facility to fruition. With the first outbreak in October, there was interest in Turkey in an animal and human focused package, but there was deep resistance from the State Planning Office and initially from the Ministries, particularly the Ministry of Health (MOH), which at that time asserted that Turkey had

sufficient resources. After the much more serious January outbreaks, the Ministry of Agriculture (MARA) supported a World Bank package, but MOH developed an extravagant wish list, including a high tech laboratory. The GOT Treasury served as a middle ground "reality check", scaling back the

ANKARA 00002708 003.2 OF 003

scope, and the contribution of grant portions from the EC and USAID were important in gaining broad support for the WB facility. Although MOH and MARA cooperated to respond to the January outbreaks, coordination has been perceived as GOT's greatest challenge, and the WB insisted that its package be a comprehensive package.

¶6. The May 8 conference call highlighted the challenges of coordination between and within the MOH, MARA, and outside agencies. UNICEF had worked closely with the MOH Primary Health Directorate and the Child Inter-sectoral Board in developing a "Strategic Communications Framework and Plan for the Prevention and Control of AI in Turkey"; however, MOH and MARA officials participating in the call complained that they had not been consulted in this formulation. In the conference call, USAID and WB officials smoothed the differences and developed an action plan for incorporating broader consultation for field surveys and communication planning, developing an operation manual and pilot areas for action, and inventorying existing relevant platforms. USAID reminded participants that a portion of its grant should be focused on communication efforts directly linked to backyard poultry restructuring and reintroduction.

¶7. Comment: At the regional conference, the Minister of Agriculture declared the AI outbreak in Turkey as "over". As noted before, Turkey has shown a strong, transparent, and cooperative response, but in fact there are new animal outbreaks occurring, although at a much slower pace, and NOT/NOT affecting humans. The GOT continues to cull birds in affected areas. Public awareness remains a critical issue, as the GOT MARA is much quieter about its AI activities, perhaps seeking to mitigate economic damage to the commercial poultry sector.

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